

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A method for manufacturing a press fabric for a paper machine, said method comprising:

- 5 providing a base fabric for said press fabric,
said base fabric being in the form of an endless loop,
said endless loop having an inner surface, an outer
surface, a first and a second lateral edge, and a
fabric width measured transversely between said
lateral edges;
- 10 providing a multi-component strip for covering
said outer surface of said base fabric in a closed
helix, said strip having a beginning, a first lateral
edge and a second lateral edge, a strip width measured
transversely thereacross, said strip width being less
15 than said fabric width, said strip having at least a
strip of top laminate layer material and a heat-
activated adhesive film bonded to one side of said
strip of top laminate layer material;
- 20 attaching said side of said strip of top laminate
layer material having said heat-activated adhesive
film at said beginning of said multi-component strip
to said outer surface of said base fabric at a point
on said first lateral edge of said base fabric using
heat and pressure;
- 25 continuing from said beginning of said multi-
component strip, attaching said side of said strip of
top laminate layer material having said heat-activated
adhesive film to said outer surface of said base
fabric in a closed helix having a plurality of turns
30 using heat and pressure, wherein said first lateral
edge of a turn of said multi-component strip being

attached to said outer surface abuts against said second lateral edge of a turn of said multi-component strip previously attached to said outer surface, until
35 said outer surface of said base fabric is completely covered by said multi-component strip in a closed helix; and

cutting said multi-component strip at a point on said second lateral edge of said base fabric, whereby
40 said multi-component strip forms a top laminate layer on said base fabric.

2. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said strip of top laminate layer material is a woven fabric.

3. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said strip of top laminate layer material is a nonwoven mesh.

4. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said strip of top laminate layer is a strip of thermoplastic sheet material.

5. A method as claimed in claim 4 wherein said thermoplastic sheet material is of polyurethane.

6. A method as claimed in claim 4 further comprising the step of aperturing said strip of thermoplastic sheet material.

7. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said heat-activated adhesive film is apertured.

8. A method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising the step of needling a staple fiber batt into said top laminate layer formed by said multi-component strip after attaching said strip to said base fabric.

9. A method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising the step, after said base fabric is completely covered by said multi-component strip in a closed helix to form said top laminate layer, of trimming said multi-
5 component strip along said first and second lateral edges of said base fabric.

10. A method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

providing a first and a second process roll, said first and second process rolls being rotatable about
5 their respective axes and said axes being parallel to one another;

mounting said base fabric around said first and second process rolls, said first and second process rolls thereby being within said endless loop of said
10 base fabric;

separating said first and second process rolls from one another to fixed positions, said base fabric thereby being placed under tension;

providing a pressure roll, said pressure roll
15 forming a nip with said first process roll and pressing said base fabric against said first process roll;

rotating said first and second process rolls in a common direction;

20 heating said multi-component strip to activate
said heat-activated adhesive film;

feeding said beginning of said multi-component
strip into said nip at said first lateral edge of said
base fabric, thereby attaching said top laminate layer
25 at said beginning of said strip to said outer surface
of said base fabric at a point on said first lateral
edge thereof;

continuing to rotate said first and second
process rolls in a common direction while feeding said
30 multi-component strip into said nip, thereby attaching
said top laminate layer to said outer surface of said
base fabric in a closed helix, until said outer
surface of said base fabric is completely covered by
said strip in a closed helix.

11. A method as claimed in claim 10 further
comprising the step of dispensing said multi-component
strip from a supply roll.

12. A method as claimed in claim 10 further
comprising the step of turning said base fabric inside
out before mounting said base fabric around said first
and second process rolls.

13. A method as claimed in claim 10 further
comprising the step of removing said base fabric from
said first and second process rolls after said outer
surface thereof is completely covered by said multi-
5 component strip.

14. A method as claimed in claim 13 further comprising the step of turning said base fabric inside out to place said top laminate layer formed by said multi-component strip on the inside thereof.

15. A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein said heating step is performed by using a heated first process roll.

16. A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein said heating step is performed by using a heated pressure roll.

17. A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein said heating step is performed by directing a flow of hot air into said nip between said multi-component strip and said base fabric.

18. A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein said heating step is performed by using an infrared heater to heat said heat-activated adhesive film of said multi-component strip before said multi-component film
5 enters said nip.

19. A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein said pressure roll extends at least for said fabric width.

20. A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein said pressure roll is shorter than said fabric width.

21. A method as claimed in claim 8 further comprising the step of heating said base fabric and said top laminate layer formed by said multi-component strip after needling said staple fiber batt therethrough to
- 5 reactivate said heat-activated adhesive film and to further connect said staple fiber batt, said top laminate layer and said base fabric together.